United Nations

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

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Supplement No. 48 (A/51/48)

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NOTE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/160 A of 22 December 1995, decided to establish an ad hoc committee of the whole of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly as the most appropriate mechanism to prepare the mid-term review in 1996 of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as provided for in the annex to resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991. In response to that resolution and following its organizational session, held on 20 June 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s conducted its work from 16 to 20 September 1996.

2. In order to conduct the review, the Ad Hoc Committee, at its organizational session, had decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session that it meet during the Assembly's fifty-first session. For that purpose, it had also recommended that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee for the period set out in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 50/160 B be extended.

3. Also, at its organizational session, the Ad Hoc Committee had decided to establish two working groups: Working Group I would deal with the assessment of national efforts based on relevant inputs from African countries and Working Group II with the response of the international community, including the United Nations system, and the necessary measures to accelerate and improve the implementation of the New Agenda.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening and duration of the session

4. The Ad Hoc Committee held the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s at United Nations Headquarters in from 16 to 20 September 1996. The Ad Hoc Committee held four meetings and a number of informal meetings.

5. The session was opened and chaired by Mr. Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, who made an opening statement.

6. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee was addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as the Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development and the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Cooperation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

7. Statements were also made by the representatives of Cameroon (on behalf of the African Group), Ireland (on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Slovenia), Namibia, Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire.

8. At the 2nd meeting, on 16 September 1996, statements were made by the representatives of Egypt, Senegal, Burkina Faso, China, Pakistan, Norway, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Guinea, South Africa and Indonesia.

9. At the same meeting, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) made a statement.

10. At the same meeting, the spokesperson for non-governmental organizations made a statement.

11. Also at the same meeting, the observer of the Global Coalition for Africa made a statement.

12. At the 3rd meeting, on 17 September 1996, statements were made by the representatives of Costa Rica (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Nigeria, India, Malta, Madagascar, the Niger, Guyana, the Russian Federation, Canada, Japan, Algeria, the United States of America, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Ethiopia, Brazil, the Gambia and Malaysia.

13. At the same meeting, the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) made a statement.

B. Attendance

14. The following Member States were represented: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Seychelles,

Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

15. The following intergovernmental organizations participated as observers: Common Fund for Commodities and OAU. The Global Coalition for Africa also participated as an observer.

16. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); UNICEF; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); UNFPA; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); World Bank; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); United Nations Industrial Development Organization; International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO.

17. The following non-governmental organizations participated as observers: Association du Comité des Habitants d'El Mourouj 2, Church World Service/ Lutheran World Relief, Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Lolonyo Women's Club, Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), The African Forum, Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), The League for Woman and Child Education, Trickle Up Program, Ukimwi Orphans Assistance (UOA), World View, ENDA Tiers Monde, Ethiopian Gemini, Trust, Ghana Association of Women Entrepreneurs and Groupe d'Initiative Commune des Paysannes de BOGSO.

C. Adoption of the agenda

18. The Ad Hoc Committee adopted the following agenda at its mid-term review:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of the Rapporteur.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Participation of non-governmental organizations.
5. Conduct of the mid-term review.
6. Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

D. Election of the Bureau

19. At its organizational session, on 20 June 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mr. Hisashi OWADA (Japan)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Alex REYN (Belgium)
Mr. Denis DANGUE REWAKA (Gabon)
Mr. Samuel R. INSANALLY (Guyana)

20. At its 1st meeting, on 16 September 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee elected, by acclamation, Mr. Dusan Rovensky (Czech Republic) as Rapporteur.

E. Organization of work

21. At its 1st meeting, on 16 September 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee approved its agenda (A/AC.25/4), as orally amended (see para. 18 above), and its organization of work.

22. Working Group I held informal consultations on 16 and 18 to 20 September 1996, and Working Group II held informal consultations on 17 to 20 September 1996.

23. The Ad Hoc Committee had before it the following documentation:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s with estimates of projected resource requirements (A/51/228 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee (A/AC.251/5);

(c) Draft conclusions of the mid-term review: introduction (A/AC.251/CRP.1);

(d) Draft conclusions of the mid-term review: institutional arrangements (A/AC.251/CRP.2);

(e) Draft conclusions of the mid-term review: conclusion (A/AC.251/CRP.3);

(f) Draft conclusions of the mid-term review: draft conclusions of Working Group I (A/AC.251/WG.I/CRP.1);

(g) Draft conclusions of the mid-term review: draft conclusions of Working Group II (A/AC.251/WG.II/CRP.1).

24. Additional background/information documents were also provided:

(a) Report of OAU on the assessment of the implementation of the New Agenda;

(b) Outcome of the High-level Seminar on African Development, held at Tokyo on 27 and 28 August 1996;

(c) Report of the Common Fund for Commodities on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/142;

(d) Report entitled "Partners in progress - Africa and the international community", on the assessment of the implementation of the New Agenda and the Tokyo Declaration;

(e) Report on the emerging role of non-governmental organizations in African sustainable development.

F. Appointment of Chairpersons of Working Groups

25. At its organizational session, on 20 June 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee endorsed the appointments of the Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana) and Mr. Alex Reyn (Belgium), to preside over Working Group I and Working Group II.

G. Participation of non-governmental organizations

26. At its organizational session, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to grant maximum participation to non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and other non-governmental organizations that had been contributing to the implementation of the New Agenda, in conformity with established rules and accepted practices.

27. During a meeting on 23 July 1996, the Bureau decided that non-governmental organizations would be allowed to be present in formal meetings and that they could make a statement each at the opening and the closing sessions. Non-governmental organizations were also asked to nominate four delegates (two African and two non-African) to participate in each of the two Working Groups as observers.

28. At its 1st meeting, on 16 September 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee endorsed the decision of the Bureau regarding the participation of the non-governmental organizations. In this connection, the representative of the United States of America made a statement.

III. MODALITIES

A. Conduct of the mid-term review

29. At the 4th meeting, on 20 September 1996, the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II made oral reports to the Ad Hoc Committee of the outcome of the informal consultations held in the two Working Groups.

30. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee approved the draft conclusions of the mid-term review of the New Agenda, as orally amended during informal consultations.

31. The Ad Hoc Committee had before it a draft resolution (A/AC.251/L.2) entitled "Mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s", submitted by the Chairman.

32. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to annex the conclusions of the mid-term review of the New Agenda to draft resolution A/AC.251/L.2 and to include it in its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

33. Also at the same meeting, the representative of Uganda made a statement, in which he proposed an oral amendment to the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/AC.251/L.2, whereby the words "Africa's submission for" would be replaced by the words "the document of the Organization of African Unity on".

34. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Ad Hoc Committee stated: "It is understood that the draft resolution is a recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly. It is procedural in nature and will enable the General Assembly formally to take action on the conclusions of the mid-term review annexed to the draft resolution."

35. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted the draft resolution, as orally amended, as well as the annex thereto containing the draft conclusions of the mid-term review of the New Agenda (see para. 44 below).

36. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States made a statement.

B. Adoption of the report

37. At the 4th meeting, on 20 September 1996, the Rapporteur introduced and orally revised the draft report.

38. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted the draft report, as orally revised.

39. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to entrust the Rapporteur with finalizing the report with a view to its submission to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

40. At the same meeting, a spokesperson for the non-governmental organizations made a concluding statement.

41. At the same meeting, the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries read a concluding statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

42. At the same meeting, the Chairman made a concluding statement.

43. At the same meeting, the representative of Cameroon made a concluding statement.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

44. At its 4th meeting, on 20 September, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, the annex to which contains the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s,

Recalling its resolutions 48/214 of 23 December 1993 and 49/142 of 23 December 1994 on the New Agenda,

Recalling also its resolutions 50/160 A and B of 22 December 1995 and 16 July 1996 establishing the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly to conduct the Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s,

Noting that the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda has been an occasion for an in-depth assessment of the actions taken in the implementation of the New Agenda and the measures needed to accelerate its implementation during the remaining period of the decade and beyond,

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda, 1/

Taking note also of the document of the Organization of African Unity on the mid-term review of the New Agenda, the outcome of the High-level Seminar on African Development, held at Tokyo on 27 and 28 August 1996, and the submission by the non-governmental organizations,

Noting the contribution made by individual Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee,

1. Adopts the conclusions of the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda, consisting of an assessment of the responses and measures to accelerate the implementation of the New Agenda, as set forth in the annex to the present resolution;

2. Requests the Governments, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to take appropriate measures in order to implement fully the recommendations contained in the annex to the present resolution;

3. Decides to conduct a final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s at its fifty-sixth session, in 2002.

1/ A/51/228 and Add.1 and A/AC.251/5.

ANNEX

MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In this political compact, African countries reaffirmed their primary responsibility for the development of their countries. The international community, at the same time, committed itself to support Africa's efforts based on the principles of partnership and shared responsibility. In order to achieve these broad objectives, it was deemed necessary for the international community to enter into a new and stronger accord with Africa that would elaborate clearly the firm commitment of the international community to support and assist Africa in its effort to implement successfully its development agenda and to reduce substantially, if not entirely eliminate, external impediments and obstacles to Africa's accelerated transformation.

2. The primary objectives of the New Agenda are the accelerated transformation, integration, diversification and growth of African economies in order to strengthen them within the world economy, reduce their vulnerability to external shocks, increase their dynamism, internalize the process of development and enhance self-reliance.

3. Since the adoption of the New Agenda there has been increasing awareness and recognition at the political level of the special situation and particular needs of Africa and these are being given priority on the international agenda, including in the programmes of action of the major United Nations summits and conferences; in the Midrand Declaration of the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; generally in relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and international instruments; and the expected outcome of the forthcoming World Food Summit.

4. Many of the critical social and economic problems which led to the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986) and of the New Agenda in 1991 still exist. In some countries the problems have even worsened. Despite this, there was an overall improvement in economic performance in some African countries in 1994 and 1995. In Africa poverty and unemployment are expected to increase substantially. The estimated resource mobilization levels in the New Agenda are still far from being attained and the key development goals have yet to be met.

5. The Secretary-General estimated that to achieve an average annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent by African countries over the course of the 1990s a minimum of US$ 30 billion in official development assistance was required in 1992, after which it would need to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum. At the mid-term review, official development assistance stood at $26.4 billion in 1995. The assessment shows that the aggregate net resource flows in 1995 to Africa reached $31 billion. Africa's external indebtedness increased from $300 billion in 1991 to $322 billion in 1995. Despite significant measures taken by the creditors to alleviate Africa's debt problem, further progress is necessary. Efforts should be continued to address effectively the problems of heavily indebted low income developing

countries in Africa undertaking economic reforms whose growth prospects continue to be severely affected by their external debt problem. The African share of world trade has declined during the period under review to 2.2 per cent. However, most African products do have preferential access to major world markets, and though still unclear the post-Uruguay round offers opportunities as well as challenges to African countries for trade growth.

6. Against this background, it is clear that a lot more remains to be done if the broad objectives of the agenda, including the full integration of Africa in the world economy, are to be achieved. The analysis of the progress made in the implementation of the New Agenda during the period 1992-1995 shows achievement in institutional and private sector development and reveals significant variations among African countries in their economic and social performance. As evidenced in the analysis, the effective and timely implementation of the New Agenda is contingent upon the political will of African Governments and their commitment to allocate adequate resources to their development objectives. However, for African efforts to succeed within the time-frame of the Agenda, they should be complemented by adequate and, as far as possible, predictable resource flows and support from the international community. A supportive enabling external environment is also an important factor in this process.

7. The priority of this mid-term review of the New Agenda must be implementation. In this regard, the System-wide Initiative on Africa is complementary to the New Agenda and is also designed to facilitate its implementation and the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits as they relate to Africa. The Special Initiative might also become an impetus for the implementation of all elements of the New Agenda. Therefore, the United Nations system should avoid unnecessary duplication of activities.

8. A number of African countries are beginning to formulate and implement strategies and policies aimed at the eradication of poverty. The implementation of the agreed conclusions of the 1996 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty will be of assistance in the context of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

9. Political and economic as well as structural and institutional reforms have been implemented in many African countries; closer regional and subregional economic cooperation has been established and the continent has seen increased democratization and the assumption at the regional and subregional level of the role and responsibilities of leadership in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

10. The mid-term review of the New Agenda takes place against a background of rapid globalization and liberalization of the world economy, which presents opportunities and challenges as well as risks and uncertainties. For Africa, with 33 of the world's 48 least developed countries, the risk of further marginalization is real. This calls for urgent action to support Africa's efforts to integrate fully into the global economy.

11. The international community has committed itself at major United Nations summits and conferences, inter-alia, to putting human beings at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. Economic and social development and environmental protection and conservation are interdependent and mutually reinforcing elements of sustainable development, and are the framework for the

efforts of the international community to achieve a higher quality of life for all people.

12. The mid-term review of the New Agenda reaffirms and underscores the mutuality of commitments and responsibilities and the need for Africa and the international community to take urgent and concrete action, as affirmed in General Assembly resolution 46/151 and recommended in the present review.

II. ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW AGENDA: AFRICAN EFFORTS

13. An assessment of New Agenda from the point of view of Africa's own efforts, taking into account the outcome of the recent cycle of major United Nations conferences and summits, indicates the following key areas for priority attention, which should be addressed in an integrated way:

(a) Economic reforms, including the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources;

(b) Promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment;

(c) Intensification of the democratization process and the strengthening of civil society;

(d) Environment and development;

(e) Agriculture, rural development and food security;

(f) Human dimension;

(g) Regional and subregional cooperation and integration;

(h) South-South cooperation.

A. Economic reforms, including the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources

1. Assessment

14. In recent years, the majority of African countries have embarked on a process of structural adjustment and wide-ranging economic reforms under agreed structural and sectoral frameworks. The areas for focus specifically address the fiscal and balance of payments deficits and monetary policies, the mobilization of domestic resources through strengthening of the efficiency and transparency in the tax system, the effectiveness of the public sector and the involvement of the private sector. In almost all countries, reform measures have been taken and continue to be pursued in order to liberalize domestic prices and external trade. About 35 countries have made monetary adjustments, 21 countries have taken steps to improve public finance management and a significant number have initiated privatization programmes.

15. A number of African countries have undertaken measures to improve their financial systems. However, financial systems are among the weakest sectors in

the African economies and are, moreover, concentrated on the formal finance system to the neglect of the informal system.

16. There have been some positive results. Only 4 countries experienced negative growth in 1995 while 12 countries achieved a growth rate of 6 per cent and above. Most African countries have been able to contain inflation and improve monetary and exchange rate policies. These results are encouraging but need to be built upon. The successes can be consolidated and sustained provided necessary resources, domestic and external, become available and the reform process is continued and strengthened. However, Africa's current domestic savings rate of 18 per cent compared to the minimum desirable rate of 25 per cent, is clearly inadequate.

17. There is concern that a significant number of developing countries, including African countries have become more vulnerable in the course of liberalizing the private capital flows in international financial markets.

2. Recommendations

18. African countries should:

(a) Deepen ongoing economic reforms, encourage domestic savings and national and foreign direct investment. The international community should continue to provide support to these efforts which are essential for sustained and sustainable growth and development;

(b) Continue to improve public expenditure patterns, focusing on priority needs and tightening procurement procedures, and to raise public revenue by restructuring taxation and improving efficiency in tax collection;

(c) Undertake, in cooperation with the international community, measures to create favourable conditions for achieving stability in private capital flows and to prevent destabilization arising from swift movements of private capital flows in order to enhance African development.

19. In relation to the strengthening of financial intermediation, African countries should:

(a) Promote deposit mobilization activities, which can be fostered through a series of seminars, workshops and training programmes, with the assistance of international financial institutions;

(b) Review and give priority to recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report entitled "Towards advancing financial intermediation in Africa" (A/50/490) through cooperation among the United Nations organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the African Development Bank and relevant subregional organizations in organizing subregional consultations involving African policy and decision makers in financial intermediation.

20. African countries should also ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals, in particular, the eradication of poverty, the generation of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration, taking into account the specific recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development regarding the impact of structural adjustment.

21. African countries could, through mutually agreed arrangements, benefit from the successful experiences of developing countries in financial intermediation, especially in deposit mobilization programmes.

B. Promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment

1. Assessment

22. In the Cairo Agenda for Action, endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in its resolution AHG/RES.236(XXXI) of 28 June 1995, 2/ Africa committed itself to the promotion of the private sector and to attracting foreign direct investment. The informal sector plays an important role in African countries. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the private sector is still weak in most African countries.

23. Many African countries, in the framework of their economic reform programmes, are making progress in establishing a favourable economic environment, including, inter alia, for attracting private, domestic and foreign direct investment, but implementation has not always been sufficient. Furthermore, basic infrastructure, such as the transportation and telecommunication networks, electricity and reliable supply of water, is generally inadequate in many African countries. This requires substantial investment, which the African countries have not been able to provide.

24. A recent United Nations study on foreign direct investment revealed that the return on investment made in Africa is substantially higher than in other developing regions, and even in most developed countries. This indicates the potential for sharply increased investment flows as economic reforms and improvement of investment climates proceed.

2. Recommendations

25. In the light of the above, African countries should take the following measures to promote the private sector and attract foreign direct investment:

(a) Promote economic reforms and improve the physical, institutional and social infrastructure in order to attract further domestic and foreign direct investment. The international community should render the complementary technical and financial support to this effort;

(b) Pursue and implement specific measures to attract investment both foreign and domestic to African countries, which include, inter alia, supply side incentives, the protection of intellectual property rights, price liberalization, removal of exchange controls, equal treatment and the removal of subsidies to unprofitable State enterprises;

(c) Encourage further privatization measures;

(d) Engage in more aggressive investment promotion activities;

2/ See A/50/647, annex II.

(e) Make as functional as possible subregional and regional cooperation and integration arrangements, particularly in the area of regional trade liberalization and trade expansion;

(f) Promote and strengthen private and public sector partnership;

(g) Improve the financial institutional infrastructure;

(h) Build and strengthen human resources and capacities for private sector development;

(i) Promote the informal sector and microenterprises by providing them with micro-credit, training, efficient technology and management skills and by fostering its linkages with the formal financial system. The current efforts of the organizations of the United Nations in this sector should be supported by the international community.

C. Intensification of the democratization process and the strengthening of civil society

1. Assessment

26. African Governments recognize that democratization, the promotion of and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance and administrative reform are essential to creating an enabling environment for sustained and sustainable growth and development. Since the adoption of the New Agenda in 1991, far-reaching changes in the system of governance, ranging from free elections to constitutional reforms in the majority of African countries, have made participatory and transparent systems of government more viable.

27. The political and economic transformations under way since the 1980s have ensured that all sectors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, are recognized as important partners in the development process in Africa. In many African countries national frameworks for dialogue, consultation and coordination with non-governmental organizations have also been established in order to facilitate African development.

28. Progress has been achieved in promoting peace and stability in a number of African countries. However, more needs to be done. Civil and ethnic conflicts continue to affect some countries. As a result of such conflict, Africa continues to host the highest number of refugees and displaced persons in the world, which places severe strain on the development of the countries affected.

2. Recommendations

29. African countries should:

(a) Strengthen existing efforts to improve governance, paying particular attention to ensuring accountability, transparency and the rule of law;

(b) Continue to broaden popular participation so that the creative energies of the people can be harnessed to promote national development. The active involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations,

community-based organizations and the business community, need to be further encouraged;

(c) Implement effectively and fully the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, 3/ which advocates a participatory approach, the empowerment of people, particularly of women, accountability, social and economic justice, respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the right to development, as well as trade union rights and the rule of law. These steps should ensure good governance, transparency and democracy in Africa.

30. In order to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency and the relevance of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, the following are recommended:

(a) Better coordination by non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations and their policies, programmes and activities, among themselves and with Governments;

(b) African non-governmental organizations should be enabled to be fully involved in the implementation of the New Agenda.

31. The crucial role of women in development and their recognized role in the decision-making process in all areas should be strengthened and a more concerted effort should be made to follow-up decisions contained in the African Common Position for the Advancement of Women adopted in November 1994 and the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, 4/ and other relevant outcomes of the recent series of major United Nations conferences and summits.

32. Lasting solutions to conflicts and civil strife must be found and these should address the root causes of conflict. African efforts to address these problems through the OAU Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts and similar mechanisms of subregional groupings deserve further support. In this regard, the international community should continue to work closely with OAU and subregional groupings to support peace initiatives, including conflict prevention, management and resolution and post-conflict peace-building rehabilitation and development. The international community should continue to support subregional and regional initiatives for conflict resolution.

D. Environment and development

1. Assessment

33. Africa faces many environmental problems, as presented by African countries during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. Further, the combination of economic factors, increased poverty and low incomes are causing evermore fragile lands to be cultivated. As a result, environmental damage is increasing and agricultural productivity has declined. In addition, desertification, drought, coastal

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3/ See A/45/427, appendix II.

4/ A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

erosion, land and water degradation, loss of genetic resources and bio-diversity seriously threaten the sustainability of growth and development.

34. Through the Bamako Convention on the Ban on the Import of Hazardous Wastes, into Africa and on the Control of Their Transboundary Movements within Africa, 5/ of 1991, Africa banned the import of toxic and hazardous wastes into the continent. Furthermore, Africa actively participated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as well as in intergovernmental negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 6/ the Convention on Biological Diversity 7/ and, notably, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. 8/ In the Cairo Agenda for Action, African countries agreed to establish national coordinating machinery to ensure integration of environmental issues into national development programmes as defined in Agenda 21 9/ and in the African Common Position on Environment and Development. 10/ Moreover, the Convention to Combat Desertification and its effective implementation is a viable framework for cooperation in the field of environment and development, particularly the achievement of sustainable development.

2. Recommendations

35. In the light of the above, action to promote and achieve sustainable development in Africa should include:

(a) Urgent measures to address the problem of poverty, particularly because poverty is one of the causes of environmental degradation;

(b) Strategies and measures to implement the Bamako Convention of 1991;

(c) Measures to support the effective implementation of all the initiatives emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and related issues.

36. Concerning desertification and drought actions should include:

(a) Early ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or

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5/ See A/46/390, annex I.

6/ A/AC.237/18 (Part II)/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex I.

7/ See United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on Biological Diversity (Environmental Laws and Institutional Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

8/ A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

9/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.93/I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution I, annex II.

10/ A/CONF.151/PC.120, annex I.

Desertification, Particularly in Africa by all countries in order to ensure its entry into force;

(b) Measures to support the elaboration and the effective implementation of national action programmes, subregional action programmes and regional action programmes, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

(c) Activities to strengthen Asia-Africa cooperation on combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, without neglecting cooperation with other developing countries affected by desertification and drought;

(d) Mobilizing substantial financial resources, including grant and concessional loans, in order to support the implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, consistent with article 20 (2A) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

(e) Promoting the mobilization of adequate, timely and predictable financial resources, including new and additional funding from the Global Environment Facility of the agreed incremental costs of those activities concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the instruments establishing the Global Environment Facility consistent with article 20 (2B) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

E. Agriculture, rural development and food security

1. Assessment

37. Land degradation is a serious environmental problem affecting extensive areas of land in Africa. Land degradation is serious because the productivity of huge areas of land is declining just when populations are increasing rapidly and there is a growing demand on the land to produce more food, fibre and fuel. Efforts to control land degradation have had limited success to date. Well planned, long-term national, subregional and regional land conservation and rehabilitation programmes, with strong political support and adequate funding from international community, are now needed.

38. Energy supplies in Africa are not commensurate with the development needs and are highly priced and unstable. In rural areas, the chief sources of energy are fuelwood, crop residues and manure, together with animal and human energy. More intensive energy inputs are required for increased productivity of human labour and for income-generation. To that end rural energy policies and technologies should promote a mix of cost-effective fossil and renewable energy sources that is itself sustainable and ensures sustainable agricultural development. Rural areas provide energy supplies in the form of wood. The full potential of agriculture and agroforestry, as well as common property resources, as sources of renewable energy, is far from being realized. The attainment of sustainable rural development is intimately linked with energy demand and supply patterns.

39. Significant progress has been made in removing major constraints to the development of the agricultural sector, including the removal of price controls, the privatization of marketing agents and improved and efficient agricultural extension services. However, agricultural production continues to lag behind population growth in a majority of African countries and much remains to be done to improve productivity, to reverse the loss of market shares for traditional agricultural commodities and to raise the level of food security.

40. In addition to inadequate agricultural production, high level of population growth and limited water resources, high rates of poverty and unemployment continue to be a major obstacle to achieving food security. Budgetary constraints in many African countries also affect development in this sector, particularly where inadequate physical infrastructure poses a major obstacle to the distribution of food.

2. Recommendations

41. To increase agricultural production and food security, the following measures should be taken:

(a) Agricultural production:

(i) Implement policies that enhance agricultural productivity to increase food production and boost export earnings and should ensure the provision of adequate budgetary allocation towards agricultural modernization;

(ii) Develop rural economies in order to increase incomes;

(iii) Diversify agricultural output. To support that objective, improved research and development in crop varieties and plant and animal disease prevention is also necessary in conjunction with improved water management and extension services. These experiences should be shared at the subregional and regional levels;

(iv) Promote agro-based industries;

(v) Improve access to training, agricultural skills, new technologies and extension services, particularly by women, who are the main food producers;

(vi) Exchange of country and regional experiences on rural energy planning methodologies in order to promote efficient planning and select cost-effective technologies by the appropriate United Nations agencies and the international community drawing on the experience and available information of non-governmental organizations in that field.

(b) Food security:

(i) Support and assist the promotion of local food production;

(ii) Promote agricultural methods that use sound ecological practices, including traditional methods;

(iii) Facilitate technical developments to improve storage, distribution and marketing of food;

(iv) Give priority to diversification in food production;

(v) Manage food aid in such a manner that it does not undermine local food production.

(c) World Food Summit:

Give due attention to agricultural and food security in Africa at the upcoming World Food Summit to be held in Rome in November 1996.

F. Human dimension

1. Assessment

42. It is acknowledged that people are at the centre of the international community's concerns for sustainable development and that they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with the environment.

43. The integration of the human dimension in the development process as elaborated in the recent series of major United Nations conferences and summits has been accepted by African countries in the pursuit of social development. This constitutes a testimony to the commitment of the African countries to the improvement of the social condition of their peoples. However, progress is still slow in the areas of poverty eradication and improved access of the population to education, health, including reproductive health, and related social services and to clean water.

44. Endemic diseases, in particular malaria and emerging threats, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), pose serious problems to African countries and will further complicate population dynamics in Africa in ways that are as yet unpredictable. In particular, these have negatively affected human resources, life expectancy and economic development.

45. The social sector has continued to experience great pressure, largely as a result of public expenditure cutbacks. Access to and the quality of education, especially at the primary level, is declining and health services are deteriorating. Also, unemployment in the region, particularly among the youth and women, is increasing. This is further compounded by the high level of school drop-out rates among girls, caused, inter alia, by teenage pregnancy. While the role of women in development is receiving greater attention, efforts have been inadequate, particularly in relation to women's access to education, economic resources and decision-making.

46. The involvement of African youth in the decision-making process and in the implementation of development programmes is critical to the long-term success of African development. Their active participation in all relevant levels of decision-making processes is imperative because it affects their lives today and has implications for their future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspective that needs to be taken into account.

2. Recommendations

47. African countries should, in the context of the New Agenda and the recent series of major United Nations conferences and summits:

(a) Endeavour to increase resource allocations in the priority areas of:

(i) Expanding access to basic education, particularly that of girls, and improving the quality of education;

(ii) Increasing access to and improving the efficiency of primary health care;

(iii) Enhancing scientific and technical capacities;

(iv) Efficiently utilizing human resources through the creation of productive employment and income opportunities, including through small agricultural holdings, while at the same time retaining the skilled manpower in the region;

(b) Actively support, in cooperation with the relevant entities of the United Nations system, efforts to intensify the struggle against malaria, and continue to combat the effects of HIV/AIDS and to implement effective responses;

(c) Integrate population policies into national development programmes and ensure the availability and promotion of reproductive health services;

(d) Continue to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in policies relating to all spheres of development. They should continue to implement policies that empower women and promote their full and equal participation in political, economic and social development, including policies that promote the empowerment of the girl-child;

(e) Agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes. The 20/20 concept, which recently led to the adoption by some countries of the Oslo Consensus, on 20/20 11/ could play a useful role.

48. Africa and the international community should ensure that youth are provided a secure and healthy future, including an environment of quality, improved standards of living and access to education and employment. These issues need to be addressed in the fulfilment of the objectives of the New Agenda.

49. The international community and the organizations of the United Nations system in their sphere of competence should support the efforts of African countries towards capacity-building for human resources development.

11/ See A/51/140, annex.

G. Regional and subregional cooperation and integration

1. Assessment

50. The Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community entered into force in May 1994. Since its signing in June 1991, African countries have embarked on its implementation, with the first phase devoted to the strengthening of subregional economic communities. To this end, increased attention is being given to the harmonization and rationalization of several organizations that are already in place in various parts of the continent.

51. The subregional economic groupings are promoting joint projects in such vital areas as water resources, energy and transport and communications. Efforts are also geared towards progressively reducing trade barriers within the existing regional economic communities, with a view to establishing free trade areas. Similarly, efforts towards monetary cooperation are under way in many parts of the region. Cooperation is also increasing in areas of peace and security. The effective implementation of these programmes and projects is constrained by the lack of funding.

2. Recommendations

52. To accelerate regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration, African countries should:

(a) Accelerate the process of harmonizing and rationalizing the institutional framework for regional and subregional economic integration and the number of institutions in order to minimize duplication and ensure a more efficient use of resources;

(b) Continue to provide necessary resources to financial and institutional support, especially in transport and communications, and to pool resources for human resources development. In this regard, the trans-Africa Highway Programme should be stepped up, as proposed in the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa;

(c) Encourage the participation of the private sector in promoting regional and subregional economic cooperation.

53. Given the magnitude of resources required for the promotion of regional and subregional cooperation and integration, and the potential that an integrated and enlarged African market would provide for greater and more profitable investment opportunities, it is essential that the international community complement Africa's efforts towards regional integration.

H. South-South cooperation

1. Assessment

54. The Cairo Agenda for Action underscores the importance of South-South cooperation as a dimension of interregional cooperation. There are differences that may limit the extent to which experiences of developing countries may be applied to Africa. African countries are committed to intensifying South-South cooperation as an indispensable element for the success of international cooperation for development. Continuous efforts have been made by individual

countries, regional and subregional groupings and international organizations towards the strengthening of South-South cooperation with Africa. The scope of this cooperation has covered such areas as the transfer of technology and expertise, the provision of advisory services, training, joint ventures, trade and investment, agricultural and fishery development, education and research, poverty eradication and combatting desertification.

55. Noteworthy initiatives from the entities of the United Nations organizations have included a wide range of activities in the technical and economic cooperation among developing countries. Despite a number of recent initiatives - such as the Bandung Framework for Asia-Africa Cooperation, the organization of sectoral forums and the assessment of African needs for cooperation with Asia, as well as the African-Latin American Institute initiative designed to support collaborative relations between the continents, the cooperation between OAU, the Latin American Economic System, the initiative to further the dialogue between the Southern African Development Community and the Southern Cone Common Market and the efforts to enhance the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic - much remains to be done to maximize South-South cooperation with Africa.

2. Recommendations

56. The following measures are recommended:

(a) African countries should intensify consultations with other developing countries, particularly from within the region, to coordinate and to strengthen South-South exchanges and to build on achievements already realized, inter alia, through technical cooperation among developing countries;

(b) Cooperation between African countries and other developing countries should continue to be actively pursued. In this context, the better utilization of existing funds or the establishment of a fund to promote this type of cooperation between African countries, with the support of other developing countries, should be considered;

(c) The international community should continue to support triangular arrangements. For the purpose of more effective implementation of the New Agenda, the international community, including international organizations, with the assistance of relevant entities of the United Nations, should be encouraged to strengthen and coordinate the activities for the formulation of concrete development projects under South-South cooperation, including the triangular arrangements;

(d) Funding organizations of the United Nations system and international financial institutions should continue to allocate resources to South-South cooperation activities with Africa, and to place themselves as third parties in triangular arrangement.

III. ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW AGENDA: EFFORTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

57. While primary responsibility for the implementation of the New Agenda lies at the national level, the international community plays a complementary role in supporting these efforts, based on an integrated approach to development, as endorsed by the recent series of major United Nations summits and conferences. The assessment of the implementation of the New Agenda pointed to a number of areas, which require priority attention. The issues are: resource flows, a solution to Africa's debt problem, trade facilitation and market access, diversification of African economies, development assistance for capacity-building, international cooperation and non-African non-governmental organizations. Practical recommendations for international actions follow a brief assessment of each area.

A. Resource flows

1. Assessment

58. The New Agenda states that a critical element of the support from the international community is the provision of adequate resource flows to Africa. The assessment shows that the aggregate net resource flows to Africa, reached $31 billion in 1995. The major types of long-term financial flows to Africa can be broadly divided into three groups: official development finance, private loans and foreign direct investment. Among these flows, official development finance is the dominant source of financial support. Africa's dependence on official development finance has increased owing in part to limited access to private loans and foreign direct investment flows.

59. The major component of official development finance flows to Africa is official development assistance. Net disbursement from official development assistance decreased from about $24.0 billion in 1991 to $21.9 billion in 1994. It subsequently increased, to $26.4 billion in 1995. 12/ Net private loans to Africa remained negative until 1994, when they were estimated at -$0.9 billion. 12/ Foreign direct investment flows, on the other hand, saw an increase from $2.8 billion in 1991 to $3.5 billion in 1994. 13/

2. Recommendations

60. Mobilization of substantial new resources from all sources, public and private, and from traditional and new sources is essential. The Secretary-General estimated in 1992 that for African countries to achieve an average annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent would require a minimum of $30 billion in net official development assistance which would need to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum. The developed countries should strive to fulfil, as soon as possible, their commitment to attain the accepted United Nations targets of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, including the agreed menu of aid targets and/or commitments, as set out

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12/ Source: ECA, 1996, from World Bank data.

13/ See A/51/228/Add.1.

in paragraph 23 of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s. 14/

61. It is important that foreign direct investment flows increase to supplement the availability of resources for economic development in Africa. In order to attract foreign direct investment, countries are invited to continue initiatives in such areas as a stable macroeconomic environment, transparent and accountable public administration, respect for property rights and the rule of law, the quality of labour, improvement of infrastructure, entrepreneurial and institutional capabilities and simplified administrative and regulatory frameworks. Many African countries have undertaken political and economic reforms, including the establishment of stock markets at country and regional levels. However, additional measures would assist African countries to pave the way for a larger inflow.

62. Additional measures should include further improvement of investment climate in African countries by further relaxing the remaining policy and institutional constraints on foreign direct investment, and encouraging the return of flight capital. While African countries continue to promote foreign direct investment at home, the international community should also take a number of measures to support African efforts. These include encouraging investment in Africa, including through, inter alia, support for venture capital initiatives, institution building and human resource development.

B. Solution of Africa's debt problem

1. Assessment

63. The total external debt of African countries continued to rise and exceeded $322 billion in 1995 as against $300 billion in 1991, representing 65.3 per cent of Africa's gross domestic product and 249.6 per cent of its total exports. Debt servicing represented 38.3 per cent of export earnings in 1994. 15/ Most of the initiatives during the period under review focused on bilateral debt. Meaningful debt alleviation measures were continued in the period under review, including the cancellation of bilateral debt and increasing concessionality.

64. The adoption of the Naples terms by the Paris Club was an important step in the evolution of an international debt strategy. Up to 20 July 1996, 19 countries had availed themselves of this facility, including 13 African countries. 16/ However, it is acknowledged that for some of the poorest and most indebted countries, that undertake the necessary adjustment efforts, there is a need for further action to be taken to bring debt and debt servicing to manageable levels. The international financial institutions are currently undertaking positive steps to alleviate the multilateral debt burden. Servicing multilateral debt accounts for nearly half of the total debt service. Problems of commercial debt in Africa should continue to be addressed.

14/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

15/ Source: ECA estimates, based on the World Bank's world debt tables.

16/ Source: World Bank, debt tables, derived from Paris Club data, 1996.

65. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s took note of the declaration of the OAU Summit in June 1995 as it relates to external debt. It also took note of the outcome of the G-7 summit at Lyons in July 1996.

2. Recommendations

66. The international community should continue to cooperate in addressing the unsustainable debt problems of African countries in order to achieve durable solutions, as follows:

(a) With respect to commercial debt, creditor countries, private banks and multilateral financial institutions are encouraged, within their prerogatives, to consider continuing the initiatives and efforts to address the commercial debt problems of heavily indebted countries in Africa, in particular those of the least developed countries;

(b) The Paris Club and other bilateral creditors are encouraged to continue their efforts to alleviate the debt problems of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries and to pursue actively the implementation of the Naples terms, where appropriate. The Paris Club creditor countries are urged, on a case by case basis, to go beyond the Naples terms for these countries. In parallel, all other bilateral creditors are encouraged to make comparable contributions;

(c) The multilateral financial institutions are invited to continue their efforts to address the debt problems of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries and to apply fully existing mechanisms. The Ad Hoc Committee noted that the Development and Interim Committees of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would consider, in the very near future, the draft framework for action on the multilateral debt of the most heavily indebted poor countries and looked forward to a favourable outcome.

C. Trade facilitation and market access

1. Assessment

67. External trade has remained the major source of earnings in all African countries. It affects the level of savings, investment and credit worthiness. Several African countries have invested in infrastructures and facilities required to promote exports of primary commodities and, in some cases, semi-processed and manufactured goods. A great number of countries have also moved towards a partial or total privatization of export operations and liberalization of the external sector, and removed other administrative and fiscal barriers. The positive achievements in economic growth since 1991 are associated with the reforms undertaken and the recent trends in the prices of major African commodities. Trade facilitation and improved market access would serve to enhance further the process of recovery.

68. Notwithstanding these reforms and the advantages of preferences accorded to Africa through the Generalized Systems of Preferences (GSPs), Africa's share in world trade was less than 3 per cent during the period under review. Africa's

share in developing countries' trade as a whole declined, from 10.9 per cent in 1990 to 6.4 per cent in 1995. 17/

69. Africa's continued reliance on a handful of primary commodities for the bulk of its export earnings, together with growing competition from Asian and Latin American producers in a shrinking market for many raw materials, resulted in the region's share of world trade declining from 3.1 per cent in 1990 to 2.1 per cent in 1995. However, Africa's exports have recently shown some recovery.

70. The Uruguay Round agreement on multilateral trade is a major step forward and provides greater trade opportunities. However, it is recognized that least developed countries and net food importing developing countries, in particular in Africa, may experience transitional costs, and the international community should assist those countries in accordance with the Marrakech decision. As a result of the most favoured nations-based tariff reductions in the Uruguay Round, there has been an erosion in the margin of preferences. However, certain preference giving countries have already taken steps to offset this erosion by reviewing their schemes to achieve a better distribution and utilization of GSP benefits among beneficiaries.

71. Trade facilitation has been recognized as one of the priority areas for trade, financial and technical cooperation in an effort to improve Africa's competitiveness. The trade efficiency initiative launched by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in cooperation with the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) has, at this stage, been endorsed by African countries, and a number of African countries are already operating "trade points" by grouping of essential services in a single trade centre to facilitate trade transactions.

72. In this context, it is worth mentioning the intra-African trade development programme of ITC, which is designed to foster economic cooperation between member countries of the various subregional economic groupings in general and the promotion of intra-African trade in particular. The consideration by the forthcoming meeting of the Trade and Development Board of a joint programme of the World Trade Organization (WTO), ITC and UNCTAD on technical assistance to selected least developed and other African countries is welcomed. This programme is an encouraging international response.

2. Recommendations

73. The situation of Africa's external trade should be further improved by the efforts of African countries and the support of the international community, particularly as regards trade facilitation and improved market access.

74. While African countries should continue their efforts in developing the appropriate physical, institutional and organizational capabilities to promote intra-African trade and to improve international competitiveness as well as to seek more trade opportunities, it is recommended that the international community should support the efforts of African countries' in the development and maintenance of trade infrastructures, so that they can cope with the challenges and benefit fully from multilateral trade arrangements.

17/ Source: ECA, Report on the Economic and Social Situation in Africa, 1996.

75. It is also recommended that, on the basis of agreements already reached by Africa's partners at the High-level Intergovernmental meeting on the Mid-Term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, the international community support the enhancement of institutional and human capacities of African countries and provide increased technical and financial support to help improve the competitiveness of African least developed countries in terms of human capacities and infrastructure development.

76. It is further recommended that Africa's trading partners consider further reducing tariffs and removing non-tariff barriers for African products. More effective utilization of GSP schemes for African countries, particularly by least developed countries, is encouraged.

D. Diversification of African economies

1. Assessment

77. Most African countries still rely on a few primary commodities for much of their export earnings. Consequently, their economies are often adversely affected by fluctuations in the demand and prices of primary commodities. Although some African countries have made attempts to diversify their economies, these efforts have only partly succeeded.

78. The main aspects to be addressed in diversification appear to be the following:

(a) To derive strength from the existing base. This includes using the endowment with natural resources, in particular agricultural and mineral commodities, and enhancing their competitiveness through productivity improvements, marketing and similar measures;

(b) To extend this basis into vertical diversification by moving into the next stage or stages of processing, depending on the competitive situation, providing additional employment as well as goods for exports;

(c) To widen the basis through horizontal diversification, thereby expanding the range of commodities and their products and exports, and to move where possible into manufacturing of non-commodity based products and into services.

These three steps can be pursued independently or in combination. In general, diversification will contribute considerably to solving the problems of commodity producers in Africa.

79. Africa's share of world manufacturing value added has remained stagnant at around 1 per cent over the past 20 years. There is, therefore, a need to accelerate the transformation of African economies from raw material producers to processors and to further industrialization. Promoting industrialization as a key element in the development and diversification of African economies is of a great importance for African countries.

2. Recommendations

80. The international community should continue to support commodity diversification efforts in Africa. In this respect, as provided in General Assembly resolution 49/142 of 23 December 1994, States participants in the African Development Fund existing within the African Development Bank are invited to pay particular attention to the diversification of African commodities with a view to accelerating that process, and to consider urgently making an initial adequate special contribution to finance the preparatory phase of commodity diversification projects and programmes in African countries.

81. As part of the follow-up of resolution 49/142, the Common Fund for Commodities should continue to give particular attention to commodity development and diversification measures in Africa. The Common Fund is invited to give due regard to facilitating the procedures for submitting projects. The cooperation between the Common Fund and African regional economic organizations should be intensified. The holding of workshops and round table meetings scheduled by the Common Fund in different regions of Africa in 1996-1998 to advance commodity development and diversification measures are welcome.

82. The Common Fund is invited to consider the establishment, within existing resources, of a project formulation facility, using to the extent possible African expertise to enhance the capacity of least developed and other African countries to design commodity development projects. In this context particular attention should be paid to vertical and horizontal diversification.

83. The members of the Common Fund should consider fulfilling as soon as possible their pledges made for the second account of the Fund. The Common Fund is encouraged to explore effective ways and means of using the resources of the first account.

84. The Common Fund and the African Development Bank should collaborate with each other with regard to commodity development measures. The initiative taken by the Common Fund to advance the cooperation with the African Development Bank is noted.

85. The transformation and diversification of African economies involves the development of human capacity, fostering entrepreneurial skills, the generation of internal capital, the attraction of foreign direct investment, transfer of technology, with due regard to the protection of intellectual property rights and general strengthening of competitiveness. To that end the relevant entities of the United Nations system and the private sector are encouraged to pool their resources and expertise to provide policy advice, institutional support and enterprise-level assistance. This includes measures to promote industrial joint ventures and other forms of business cooperation.

86. The relevant entities of the United Nations system as well as OAU and all other partners in the development process are requested to continue to play an active and more effective role in the implementation of the Programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

E. Development assistance for capacity-building

1. Assessment

87. The international community, including organizations of the United Nations system, has provided African countries with support in their efforts to build capacity for the promotion of sustainable development. Focus has increasingly been given to poverty alleviation, improving social infrastructure, and building institutional and human capacity to improve the formulation, execution, evaluation and coordination of development programmes.

88. However, in view of the limited resources, both domestic and external, African countries are still constrained in their efforts to build the necessary human and institutional capacity.

2. Recommendations

89. Capacity-building and its sustainability should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system.

90. In the context of national execution and capacity-building, focus should be given to enhancing the absorptive capacity in African countries.

91. The international community needs to give priority to the allocation of scarce grant resources to programmes and projects in low-income developing countries and least developed countries, particularly in Africa.

92. Focus should be given to support Africa's efforts in the field of social development, especially poverty eradication. The 20/20 concept, which recently led to the adoption by some countries of the Oslo Consensus, could play a useful role in that context.

F. International cooperation

93. The series of United Nations international conferences and summits has helped achieve a global consensus on the importance of the interdependence of, inter alia, social development, economic development, environmental protection and human rights, placing human beings at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. The particular case of Africa was highlighted at the World Summit for Children in New York, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio, the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna, the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) at Istanbul. In the light of recent agreements reached by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, regarding the special attention needed for Africa, including the need for international support to complement African efforts to implement sustainable land management policies, it is the expectation of the international community that the upcoming 1996 World Food Summit in Rome will also address the critical situation of food security in Africa. Based on this consensus, as well as in the context of New Agenda partnership, Africa's development partners should continue their cooperation

with the countries in the region to accelerate progress to meet the goals identified by the New Agenda.

1. Role of the United Nations system

94. The economic recovery and development of Africa has been proclaimed one of the top priority issues of the United Nations in the 1990s but, more concretely, special programmes of the United Nations medium-term plans (programme 45 of the medium-term plan for 1992-1997 and programme 6 of the medium-term plan for 1998-2001) and a special section of the United Nations programme budget (section 7B) have been established for Africa.

95. The System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is complementary to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and is also designed to facilitate its implementation and the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences as they relate to Africa. The Special Initiative might also become an impetus for the implementation of all elements of the New Agenda, including the mobilization of adequate resources. While welcoming this new Special Initiative, the United Nations system should focus its efforts on coordination and implementation of the New Agenda and avoid unnecessary duplication of activities.

96. Major steps undertaken by the United Nations system to facilitate cooperation between the African countries, include the implementation of phase II of the programme for the Second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, of the Programme of Action for the African Least Developed Countries of the 1990s, and of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1993-2002).

2. Supporting regional integration

97. The international community should endeavour to assist African countries to establish the African Economic Community, to strengthen the functioning of existing subregional organizations and scientific organizations and in building their technological capacity, promoting diversification of African economies, transport, telecommunication and subregional institutions dealing with informatics. In this regard, the implementation of the programme of the Second Transport and Communications Decade for Africa is considered of crucial importance. International support should be given for cooperation programmes between subregional and regional organizations.

G. Non-African non-governmental organizations

1. Assessment

98. The period under review has seen continued growth in numbers, strength and influence of African as well as non-African non-governmental organizations. There is increased appreciation for non-governmental organizations. The total aid flows to Africa through non-governmental organizations since 1991, estimated to $7 billion, show the impact in the social and economic development in Africa.18/

18/ Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1996.

99. African non-governmental organizations are part of the implementors of external development assistance, since they can be effective and efficient contributors to development. Donor efforts to channel greater amounts through non-governmental organizations to support efforts at the grassroots and to assist vulnerable groups is part of capacity-building and effective use of national capacity.

2. Recommendations

100. In consultation with host Governments, non-African non-governmental organizations could make greater use of thematic and other informal forums at the field level to enhance the dialogue between Governments and all relevant development partners of civil society.

IV. FOLLOW-UP, MONITORING AND EVALUATION MACHINERY

A. Assessment

101. Paragraph 40 of the New Agenda stipulates that the United Nations system should contribute to ensuring an effective follow-up and monitoring the implementation of the New Agenda. Action taken at the global, regional and country levels includes:

(a) At the global level, in the intergovernmental processes, efforts were made by the international community to put African economic recovery and development as a high priority. Functions in this regard were performed United Nations system-wide primarily by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries and other actors, which include a panel of high-level personalities;

(b) At the regional and subregional levels, the Inter-Agency Task Force on African Economic Recovery and Development chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) monitored the effective implementation of the New Agenda and fed the intergovernmental processes with the results of action concretely being taken;

(c) At the country level, the organization of the United Nations system, in cooperation with Governments, contributed to the efforts to implement the New Agenda.

102. The major shortcomings in the implementation of the New Agenda were visible both at the advocacy and the institutional levels. In respect to advocacy, the New Agenda was not adequately promoted by the relevant United Nations institutions, particularly as a result of lack of clear mandates and policy directions.

2. Recommendations

103. Monitoring and evaluation for the implementation and follow-up of the New Agenda at the national, regional and global levels should be improved.

104. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the Department of Public Information, Economic Commission for Africa, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and

international organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, within their respective mandates, should ensure that advocacy is undertaken in a strategic manner.

105. Advocacy and implementation of the New Agenda for the United Nations system should be further reviewed with a view to enhancing coordination among relevant bodies. The Special Initiative on Africa should also be considered.

106. In the context of country cooperation frameworks, the United Nations agencies, through the resident coordinator system, should ensure that the relevant recommendations of the mid-term review are integrated and implemented.

107. The final review and appraisal of the New Agenda should be conducted in 2002 by an ad hoc committee of the whole of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. This would supersede the provisions of 43 (e) of the New Agenda.

108. The Secretary-General should bring the outcome of the present mid-term review to the attention of the United Nations system of organizations and of other international organizations for follow-up action. Similarly, other international development forums such as the Development Assistance Committee, and the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development should be informed of the review and its follow-up.